

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 238198

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TAGS: PFOR, AR, US

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA - IDB LOAN

FOLLOWING GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR USE AT DEPARTMENT PRESS

BRIEFING, SEPTEMBER 23, BUT NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

Q. IS IT CORRECT THAT THE U.S. IS SUPPORTING (HAS
SUPPORTED) AN \$8 MILLION IDB LOAN FOR ARGENTINA?

A. YES.

Q. QUESTIONS ARE BEING RAISED ABOUT THIS IN RELATION TO
THE HARKIN AMENDMENT, WHICH DIRECTS THE U.S. EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE IDB TO VOTE AGAINST ANY LOAN TO A COUNTRY
WHICH "ENGAGES IN A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATIONS
OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS..." DOES THIS
ACTION MEAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA IS "CLEAN"

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PAGE 02 STATE 238198

FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW?

A. IN DECIDING OUR POSITION ON THIS LOAN, WE GAVE EXTREMELY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE POSSIBLE APPLICABILITY OF HARKIN. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT A HIGH LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS EXISTS AT PRESENT IN ARGENTINA.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ALSO TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION THAT THE PRESENT GOA HAS BEEN IN POWER ONLY A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME AND INHERITED A GREAT DEAL OF THESE PROBLEMS FROM ITS PREDECESSOR GOVERNMENT. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THE GOA HAS PLEDGED ITSELF TO ENDING TERRORISM FROM BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT WINGS OF ARGENTINA'S POLITICAL SPECTRUM, AT THE SAME TIME RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF ITS CITIZENRY.

Q. YES, BUT THERE STILL IS THE PROBLEM OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS? VIOLATIONS ARE OCCURRING, ARE THEY NOT?

A. THE CENTRAL QUESTION, AS WE SEE IT, IS WHETHER A "CONSISTENT PATTERN" OF SUCH VIOLATIONS IS OCCURRING. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A JUDGMENT TO THAT EXTENT IS JUSTIFIED AT THIS TIME.

Q. WON'T THIS DECISION BE REGARDED AS A SIGNAL TO REPRESSIVE REGIMES IN THE REGION THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS WITH IMPUNITY?

A. NOT IN OUR JUDGMENT. WE FEEL TWO THINGS ARE INVOLVED: FIRST, THE QUESTION OF APPLICABILITY OF THE HARKIN AMENDMENT IS DECIDED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. IN THIS MOST RECENT CASE, WE DECIDED, AFTER THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THAT THE FACTS DO NOT MERIT APPLICATION OF THE AMENDMENT. HOWEVER, IN JULY, WE DID APPLY THE AMENDMENT WHEN WE VOTED AGAINST A \$21 MILLION INDUSTRIAL CREDIT TO CHILE. BUT, THERE IS A SECOND AND BROADER QUESTION HERE -- THAT OF THE GENERAL EFFICACY OF USING SANCTIONS SUCH AS THOSE DICTATED BY THE HARKIN AMENDMENT. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH MEASURES ARE OF LIMITED UTILITY AS DETERRENTS AND IN THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SPECIFICALLY, THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE LINE OF ACTION WE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 238198

CAN TAKE IS TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITIES OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS, SUCH AS THE UN AND INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

Q. ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL IN EFFECT NOT ENFORCE THE HARKIN AMENDMENT?

A. NOT AT ALL. AS I SAID, WE HAVE ALREADY INVOKED IT

IN ONE CASE. KISSINGER

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